

Kinship Caregivers Support Program (KCSP) Funds Administration

Program Requirements

The Kinship Caregivers Support Program funds are to support kinship caregivers (grandparents and other relatives) statewide who are at the greatest risk of being unable to maintain the caregiving role without additional financial support.

The KCSP funds are provided solely for ADS, or their designated subcontractors to authorize services or items to support kinship families.

Collaboration and Outreach for the KCSP

- In carrying out the Kinship Caregivers Support Program, ADS must coordinate the activities of the agencies or the designated subcontractor with the activities of other public and private agencies or organizations providing services for kinship caregivers.
- ADS or its subcontractor must conduct culturally relevant outreach for the KCSP to kinship caregivers and to possible referral agencies.

Eligibility for the KCSP

Persons eligible to receive funding from the Kinship Caregivers Support Program include:

- a grandparent (or step grandparent) or a relative of any age raising a child, age 18 or younger, by blood or marriage and who lives with the child, and
- a relative who is the primary caregiver of the child because the biological or adoptive parents are unable or unwilling to serve as the primary caregiver of the child; and
- a relative who is raising the child either with a legal relationship; such as legal custody or guardianship or informally; and
- a relative who is at risk of not being able to continue kinship caregiving without additional financial support services
- In all cases the child is living with the kinship caregiver and the parent(s) is consistently absent from the home.

The Kinship Caregiver must provide verification of their primary caregiving relationship to the child from a reliable source. The verification source must be documented in client's file. Examples include: legal custody, medical provider, notarized parental consent agreement, school documentation, a tax return, or Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) award letter for services; e.g. TANF Child Only Grant.

If the kinship caregiver does not have any documented proof, the KCSP staff must receive permission to make contact with an appropriate professional or agency, or to make a home visit to verify the primary kinship care relationship.

Persons who are ineligible to receive funding from the Kinship Caregivers Support Program include kinship caregivers who are:

- a) licensed foster care parents receiving foster care payments for the relative child; or

- b) caring for a child who has an open case with the state's DSHS Child Welfare Services (CWS) or Child Protective Services (CPS), and therefore may have access to similar funding through the Relative Support Services Fund; or
- c) caring for a child who is a dependent of Washington State.

Uses for the KCSP Funds

The Kinship Caregivers Support Program funds can be used to help pay for the cost of emergent needs incurred by kinship caregivers at the time a child(ren) comes to live with them as well as after the initial period. Items and services for which the KCSP funds can be used include:

- First/last month's rent or utility hook-ups for relatives who must move in order to take a child into their home;
- One-time rent and/or utility assistance may be available on a case-by-case basis after all other rent/utility supports are accessed and when a family is at immediate risk of eviction and/or utility shut-off;
- Purchase of bedding, furniture, supplies, clothes, safety locks, etc. so that a child(ren) can live with the kinship caregiver;
- Facilitation of third party custody for relatives when all relevant parties agree upon the action. Payment for services such as mediation, Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), court facilitation, attorney fees are allowed;*
- Gas and bus vouchers/car repairs needed to transport or provide for the child;
- Food;
- Transition counseling for the kinship caregiver and child(ren) to adjust to their living arrangement;
- School supplies/uniforms/band instrument rentals/school field trips, etc.;
- Sports and youth activity registrations/fees/uniforms;
- Durable medical equipment or assistive technology devices to benefit the child not covered by Medicaid or other health insurance;
- Tutoring;
- Interpreter services; or
- Supervision for child(ren) during kinship caregiver appointments**.

***A background check is required before payment can be authorized to an individual for supervision of child(ren) during caregiver appointments or providing tutoring services.*

Service providers (e.g. legal providers, mental health counselors, interpreters) receiving KCSP payment must be certified or licensed through Washington State, with the exception of persons supervising the child(ren) during caregiver appointments or providing tutoring services.

Determining Individual Kinship Caregiver Funding Levels

ADS or its designated subcontractors will screen kinship caregivers according to standardized procedures developed by ADS to determine if and how much financial support may be available to meet specific needs of kinship caregivers.

- Those kinship caregivers experiencing the most urgent/emergency needs have the highest priority.

- Alternate payment sources must be exhausted prior to authorizing payment to the kinship caregiver.
- ADS will determine the amount of financial support allocated to each individual kinship caregiver based on need and funding available.
- Kinship caregivers may apply to ADS for financial assistance one time per year. The financial support for a particular intervention may last no more than three months. (If a fourth month is needed, an exception can be made and must be documented.)
- The KCSP funds are for eligible expenses that have been incurred or eligible services or items that would need to be acquired by the kinship caregiver.
- ADS will manage the authorizations and have in place or develop a payment system for approved goods and services, which can include: 1) vouchers 2) purchase orders, and/or 3) credit cards for approved staff; and/or 4) food and gas cards which exclude other items from being purchased. Only a check may be provided to a third party service provider accompanied by a receipt, invoice or other valid documentation, but direct award of cash to a relative caregiver is not allowed.
- ADS is responsible to ensure that when purchasing goods/services or one-time set-up fees on behalf of an eligible kinship caregiver, documentation within the client file must include:
 1. client's name;
 2. children's first and last names, their birthdates, gender, and last four digits of their social security numbers (if available);
 3. a description of the goods and/or services including purchase price;
 4. confirmation that the purchase is consistent with needs identified by the caregiver and is consistent with program requirements; and
 5. proof that the goods were purchased, goods or services received and the costs verified.
- ADS will decide the process that works best for its service area. Agencies must be able to produce copies of invoices, receipts, cancelled checks and client case notes.
- Kinship caregivers must sign a voucher receipt or agreement acknowledging that funding may only be used for authorized items/services and their responsibilities. (i.e., any spending over the amount authorized the caregiver is responsible for paying and mailing receipt(s) back to KCSP office, etc.).
- Depending on the needs presented by the kinship caregivers, more than one need may be addressed by the Kinship Caregivers Support Program funds.
- The funds cannot be used for ongoing benefits to meet basic needs such as ongoing rent or utility payments.
- The KCSP funds are not permitted to pay for children's medical or dental services.
- The KCSP funds will not affect the TANF grant for the kinship caregivers.
- ADS will be responsible for handling and approving the KCSP Exceptions to Policy (ETPs) cases. ADS will send copies (by email) of the approved ETP requests to the ADSA KCSP Program Manager who can also be consulted on individual cases.